



## NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM FALL 2007

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1. *How do we register our Neighborhood Association with the City?***

A form is provided on the Arlington Strong Neighborhood's Initiatives website, on the Neighborhood Network Page at: <http://www.arlingtontx.gov/asni/networkinitiativesform.html>. Submit this form electronically to become a member of the City of Arlington Neighborhood Network and be eligible to request a matching grant. Citizens on Patrol or Community Watch Groups should be registered with the Arlington Police Department.

**2. *My Neighborhood Association is not a 501(c)3. What must I provide as proof that we are an established association?***

You must be registered with the City (as described in question one) and will need to provide a copy of your association's bylaws, current Board of Director/Officer list, a recent bank statement and the minutes from your last meeting. If you are incorporated in the State of Texas, please provide your articles of incorporation as well (not required.)

**3. *How can my neighborhood association become a 501(c)3? How much will it cost, and how long does it take? Can we apply for a matching grant to help cover the costs?***

The length of time will all depend on how organized you are already. If you are starting from scratch, the Neighborhood Organizational Handbook on the City of Arlington Neighborhood Initiative website is a good place to start. You can find this guide at ([http://www.arlingtontx.gov/asni/pdf/Handbook\\_Neighborhood\\_Organizational.pdf](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/asni/pdf/Handbook_Neighborhood_Organizational.pdf)) and read question number four.

If you are already well organized, have bylaws and a Board or Officers, or are incorporated with the State of Texas, you will need to apply for a federal Tax ID Number (also called EIN) then complete and submit IRS form 1023 requesting 501(c)3 status. The IRS can take up to six months to process non-profit applications and the application cost is based on the amount of money the organization has or will receive annually. The fee is either \$300 or \$750 currently, depending on the amount of money your organization expects to generate annually.

Matching grants are available for the cost of the application, and are available only for established associations (as described in question number two) with the time for completing the forms to be counted as volunteer hours, as well as donated/discounted professional services as acceptable towards the match. This is a one time request. A copy of your IRS Determination letter will be request as part of the project close out.

**4. *What if my neighborhood doesn't even have an association yet?***

If you are starting from scratch, the Neighborhood Organizational Handbook on the City of Arlington Neighborhood Initiative website is a good place to start. You can find this guide at ([http://www.arlingtontx.gov/asni/pdf/Handbook\\_Neighborhood\\_Organizational.pdf](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/asni/pdf/Handbook_Neighborhood_Organizational.pdf)) Matching grants may also be available in the form of seed money to help in the organization of a neighborhood association where one currently does not exist. These funds can be used for a community event or other allowable activity that will jumpstart your neighbors getting organized. The maximum allowable request for such purpose is \$1000, and this can request can only be made one time. For this type of activity a fiscal agent is still required, but proof of establishment is obviously waived. Please be sure your neighborhood doesn't have an

established association first. Project close out will include registering your Neighborhood Association with the City once you have elected your first officers.

Before your neighborhood association is established, there is still an opportunity for projects in your neighborhood to qualify for matching grants by partnering with youth organizations. Read more about this opportunity in question seven.

**5. *How do we submit our project idea or request for a matching grant?***

First you will need to send a letter of intent. Based on those, the city will accept full grant proposals by invitation only. A form and instructions are provided by the City on how to complete and submit your letter of intent.

**6. *What are the caps?***

Grant requests can be made for a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$10,000.

**7. *Are there any special programs for encouraging youth participation?***

An additional \$5000 (up to \$15,000) can be requested for projects where implementation includes at least 66% (2 to1) of the volunteer labor being provided by youth, and youth are encouraged to take other leadership roles in the project.

In addition, program money is reserved for grants of \$500 to \$5000 available for youth organizations that propose projects in neighborhoods where neighborhood organizations currently are not established. Match stipulations still apply and a 501(c)3 fiscal agent is still required.

**8. *What kinds of projects are eligible for the matching grants program?***

First and foremost, the project must serve a public purpose, and must benefit a neighborhood. An example of eligible projects include but are not limited to: crime reduction, beautification, action plans, improvements to neighborhood parks, traffic calming sign toppers, support money for seeking 501(c)3 status or seed fund for a community celebration to start a neighborhood association, public amenities, tree planting, and safety equipment. If more appropriate sources of funding than a neighborhood grant might be available for a project, we will try our best to link you with those available resources.

**9. *What types of projects are ineligible?***

Generally projects that only benefit an individual or restricted group of people, such as those inside a gated community. Other reasons for ineligibility might include, inability to make the grant match, requests for educational/social services, salaries or operating expenses, request to supplant current funding being received, projects that conflict with City improvements, are outside the city limits, or do not comply with local, state or federal laws.

**10. *Can letters of intent be submitted on multiple projects by the same organization?***

Yes! In fact the City encourages associations to propose multiple projects to increase the possibility that one will actually be funded. When submitting multiple projects, we'd request that the association prioritize them for the selection committee. When multiple grant requests are submitted by the same association, a maximum of only one will be funded during any given grant cycle.

**11. What will the City look for when reviewing the letter of intent?**

The City will confirm that the proposed project serves a public purpose or need, benefits a neighborhood, has a 501(c)3 to serve as the fiscal agent and proposes to meet match requirements.

**12. Is there an appeal process if we are not invited to submit a full grant proposal?**

A letter of appeal may be sent to the Selection Committee Chair requesting reconsideration if the submitter can provide additional information which supports that the project does in fact meet the criteria for which they were denied an invitation to submit a full grant proposal. Applicants will still be held to the same grant submission timelines if their request for reconsideration is accepted and an invitation to submit a full grant is extended. If you submit a full proposal and are not chosen for funding, you are encouraged to further develop your project and apply again in a future grant cycle.

**13. How will I know if I've been invited to submit a full grant proposal?**

You will receive a letter in the mail assigning you a liaison on the City staff and a full grant application packet if you are invited to submit a full proposal. Invitation to submit a full proposal is not indicative of receiving a grant.

**14. What criteria will be used to evaluate the full grant applications?**

Grant proposals will be evaluated on how well they do the following: demonstrated project need, demonstrated benefit to neighborhood, demonstrated functional benefit, budget clearly reflects accurate project costs, cost effective, good cost-benefit ratio, detailed and achievable timeline is presented, project well-articulated, project well planned, demonstrated ability to meet codes, project ready to proceed, demonstrated long-term maintenance, builds neighborhood cooperation, involves a significant number of neighbors, benefits a significant number of neighbors, project meets city priorities, project compliments city's long term plans, and project involves collaboration with other groups.

If you have requested consideration for the Neighborhood Youth Partnership Matching Grant Proposals 66% of the volunteer labor must be youth. In this category, consideration will also be given of how the neighborhood organization encouraged youth to have additional roles in the process such as, youth identified the neighborhood issue, youth assessed the community need, youth developed the project idea, youth completed the letter of intent, youth wrote the grant proposal, or youth played more than the required role (more than 66% of the volunteers) in execution of the project.

If you have requested to be considered for the Youth Projects for neighborhoods with out existing associations, consideration will also be made of how your project might encourage the eventual formation of an organized neighborhood association in your project area.

**15. Who decides if a grant proposal is funded?**

Grant proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee of City staff, chaired by a Deputy City Manager. Their recommendation will be presented to the Community and Neighborhood Development Committee and then to the City Council for final approval.

**16. What happens next if our grant proposal is approved?**

After the City Council formally approves the grant recipients by resolution, you will receive an award letter in the mail. This letter will be followed by a contract that will need to be signed by the grantee and returned to the City right away. This agreement must be returned before work

on the project begins or money is distributed. Grantees will also be recognized during Neighborhoods Month activities in June each year. Once signed contracts are returned to the City, a check for the amount approved will be distributed to the fiscal agent for the awarded project. The grantees will be able to obtain their funding and coordinate documentation of expenditure through their fiscal agent.

**17. *How soon can work begin on the project and how long do we have to complete it?***

Work on the project must begin no sooner than when the letter agreement is signed and returned to the City and no later than 60 days from signing the agreement. All work should be complete within 180 days of signing the letter agreement. You'll be asked to check in with your City liaison monthly during your project implementation.

**18. *What needs to be done once the project is complete?***

Within 30 days of project completion, the project will need to be closed out with the City. Failure to close out a project will result in future ineligibility to apply for grants by both the grantee and the fiscal agent.

To close out the project the grantee will need to provide:

- post-completion photographs of the project site (if applicable)
- a final list of all volunteers working on the project
  - time sheets for each volunteer w/ activities, days & number of hours worked
  - dollar match equivalent for the combined hours worked
- receipts for all cash purchases with
  - the vendor's name, address, telephone number
  - item(s) purchased, date and method of purchase
  - proof of payment
- logs documenting volunteer professional services by project segment, with the days and numbers of hours worked and fair market value of donated work
- vendor letters for any donated or discounted goods, on company letterhead showing the fair market value for the contribution
- documentation should support that all cash matched funds were exhausted prior to spending grant funds provided by the City